



**STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
POLICY DIRECTIVE**

Policy No. DOC 4.5.33	Subject: OFFENDER MEDICAL EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS
Chapter 4: FACILITY/PROGRAM SERVICES	Page 1 of 2
Section 5: Health Care for Secure Facilities	Effective Date: Jan 1, 1998
Signature: /s/ Bill Slaughter, Director	Revision Date: 04/18/06

I. POLICY

The Department of Corrections facility staff will provide notifications of an offender's serious or critical illness, injury, or death in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

II. APPLICABILITY

The secure facilities that include Riverside and Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facilities, Montana State Prison, Montana Women's Prison, Treasure State Correctional Training Center, and the private and regional facilities contracted to the Department of Corrections.

III. REFERENCES

None.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Serious or Critical Illness or Injury – Any injury determined to be life threatening or requiring emergency medical care or surgery.

Health Care Staff – Includes licensed health care providers and non-licensed health care staff (e.g., medical records staff, health care aides) responsible for offender health care administration and treatment.

Health Care Providers – Licensed health care providers (e.g., physicians, nurses, psychiatrists, dentists, and mental health practitioners), including contracted or fee-for-service providers, responsible for offender health care and treatment.

Chief Facility Health Officer – The health authority or nursing supervisor responsible for the facility health care services.

Facility Administrator – The official, regardless of local title (administrator, warden, superintendent), ultimately responsible for the facility or program operation and management.

V. DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES

A. Notifications

1. Health care providers:

- a. will encourage offenders to discuss their non-emergent medical problems, planned treatments, and surgeries with family members;

Policy No. DOC 4.5.33	Chapter 4: Facility/Program Services	Page 2 of 2
Subject: NOTIFICATION IN MEDICAL EMERGENCIES		

- b. will notify the chief facility health officer of a serious offender illness or injury requiring medical treatment; and
 - c. must notify the on-call physician if the facility has on-call physician coverage.
2. The chief facility health officer, or designee, will notify the facility administrator or designated custody staff when medical emergencies warrant notification to the next of kin.
3. The facility administrator, or designee, will notify the offender's next of kin by telephone or, when telephone contact is impossible, by written communication.

B. Special Visits

1. The facility administrator will review all requests for special family visits with a serious or critically ill or injured offender at a hospital or in the facility.
2. Approved family visits will be conducted in accordance with facility operating procedures.

C. Offender Death

1. Facility staff will notify the Department medical director of offender death and comply with procedures in accordance with *DOC 4.5.34, Offender Death*.

D. Release of Information

1. Facility health care staff will handle information about an offender's medical condition in accordance with *DOC policies 4.5.29, Offender Health Record & Information Confidentiality*, and *1.5.6, Offender Records Access and Release*.
2. Facility staff will refer all information requests to the facility public information officer, facility administrator, or Department communications director.
3. In all cases, the facility administrator must notify the offender's next of kin prior to the release of information to the public or media.

VI. CLOSING

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the health services bureau chief.